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Intelligence crippled

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WASHINGTON,

D.C.—A powerful bomb exploded in the U.S. Capitol Building, claiming the lives of 14 Senators and seriously injuring 12 others. The blast tore through a hallway adjacent to the U.S. Senate Chamber at 10:55 p.m., just as the Senate was adjourning. A group calling itself the Armed Resistance Unit claimed responsibility for the bombing and said the action was taken in response to U.S. "military aggression" in Grenada and Lebanon....

That's the way the story could have read, had the Senate not cut short its planned late-night session by adjourning at 7:05 p.m. on November 7. As it was, the bomb went off after the building was deserted. There was more than \$250,000 in damage, but no one was hurt. If the Senate had stayed in session late -- as it did the night before -- the toll would have been much greater.

We should not be surprised when our nation's lawmakers become the target of such an attack. Since 1968, CIA files record over 8,000 terrorist incidents worldwide, and almost half of them were directed at U.S. citizens or property.

Some members of Congress have demanded court martials for the military commanders caught by surprise when terrorists bombed the Marine headquarters in Lebanon. Yet by the same standard Congressional leaders could be

held accountable for allowing someone to bomb the Capitol! Indeed, it was Congress (along with various administrations) who, in the name of "civil liberties," restricted our intelligence agencies and damaged our ability to protect the national security.

In 1973, the Office of Management and Budget failed to allocate funds for the Subversive Activities Control Board, thus shutting it down.

In 1974, the Hughes-Ryan Amendment required the President to approve covert actions in advance and then report the actions to a congressional committee. The Privacy Act barred the FBI from keeping files on "first Amendment" activities. This meant that the FBI could no longer keep files of subversive newsletters or press reports on the statements of potentially violent subversives.

Also in 1974, the Freedom of Information Act gave the court the power to decide whether documents were improperly classified. The act discouraged informants and foreign governments from giving information to the FBI and CIA.

Between 1974 and 1976, the CIA demanded the retirement of 2,000 officers.

In 1975, the House Internal Security Committee was abolished. The Rockefeller Commission and Senator Frank Church (D-Idaho) reported on CIA "wrongdoing," expos-

ing many covert operations and demoralizing the agency.

In 1977, the files of the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee were ordered destroyed. Two years later, Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Massachusetts) managed to abolish the subcommittee.

By 1978, no fewer than eight congressional committees had oversight of CIA and FBI funding. The Foreign Service Intelligence Act required a warrant before electronic surveillance could be used as a measure against foreign spies; before a tap could be placed, the FBI was obliged to prove that a terrorist group received, "substantial" direction from abroad.

The 1980 election reversed the trend toward the dismantling of our intelligence agencies, but we have a long way to go before our efforts are adequate against the threat we face. With the national political conventions and the Los Angeles Olympics set for this summer, we would do well to remember the words of Karl Marx: "There is only one way to shorten the murderous death agonies of the old society, only one way to shorten the bloody birth pangs of the new society...revolutionary terrorism" (in the newspaper "Neue Rheinische Zeitung," November 5, 1848).

But it was not the Marxists who crippled our intelligence agencies. It was our own national politicians, Democrat and Republican alike..